



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Intangible  
Cultural  
Heritage

Original: English

## CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

### INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Fifth session  
Nairobi, Kenya  
November 2010

#### NOMINATION FILE NO. 00345 FOR INSCRIPTION ON THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN 2010

<b>A. STATE(S) PARTY(IES)</b> <i>For multi-national nominations, States Parties should be listed in the order on which they have mutually agreed.</i>
India
<b>B. NAME OF THE ELEMENT</b>
<b>B.1. Name of the element in English or French</b> <i>This is the official name of the element that will appear in published material about the Representative List. It should be concise. Please do not exceed 200 characters, including spaces and punctuation. The name should be transcribed in Latin Unicode characters (Basic Latin, Latin-1 Supplement, Latin Extended-A or Latin Extended Additional).</i>
Mudiyettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala
<b>B.2. Name of the element in the language and script of the community concerned, if applicable</b> <i>This is the official name of the element in the vernacular language corresponding to the official name in English or French (point B.1.). It should be concise. Please do not exceed 200 characters in Unicode (Latin or others), including spaces and punctuation.</i>
Mudiyettu

**B.3. Other name(s) of the element, if any**

*In addition to the official name(s) of the element (B.1.) please mention alternate name(s), if any, by which the element is known, in Unicode characters (Latin or others).*

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**C. CHARACTERISTIC OF THE ELEMENT****C.1. Identification of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned**

*According to the 2003 Convention, intangible heritage can only be identified with reference to communities, groups or individuals that recognize it as part of their cultural heritage. Thus it is important to identify clearly one or several communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned with the nominated element. The information provided should allow the Committee to identify the communities, groups or individuals concerned with an element, and should be mutually coherent with the information in sections 1 to 5 below.*

Members of the Marar and Kuruppu communities in Thrissur, Ernakulam, Kottayam and Iddukki districts of Kerala perform Mudi yettu. The Pazhoor Kunjan Marar family of Piravam in Ernakulam District has a tradition of more than 250 years in the field of performing Mudi yettu. However, it is only the male members in the family who practice the form. There are only 3 traditional families of regular performers of Mudi yettu at present in the country:

1. Pazhoor Damodara Marar Smaraka Gurukulam at Pazhoor, Ernakulam District, led by Pazhoor Narayanan Marar, son of Pazhoor Damodara Marar, and Pazhoor Muraleedharan Marar, brother of the late Pazhoor Damodara Marar.
2. Sankarankutty Smaraka Mudi yettu troupe at Keezhillam, led by the sons of late Keezhillam Sankarankutty Marar : Keezhillam Unnikrishnan and Keezhillam Gopalakrishnan.
3. Varanattu Kurup at Koratty led by Kizhake Varanattu Nanu (Narayana) Kurup and Sankaranarayana Kurup.

**C.2. Geographic location and range of the element and location of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned**

*This section should identify the range of distribution of the element, indicating if possible the geographic locations in which it is centred. If related elements are practiced in neighbouring areas, please so indicate.*

The performance takes place in the following four districts, which once belonged to the old Princely States of Travancore and Cochin of Kerala, India.

1. Ernakulam
2. Thrissur
3. Kottayam
4. Iddukki

Mudi yettu is performed in 'Bhagvati Kavus', the temples of the Mother Goddess, between February and May after the harvesting season, along the banks of the Chalakkudy, Puzha, Periyar and Moovattupuzha rivers that flow in these districts.

### **C.3. Domain(s) represented by the element**

*Identify concisely the domain(s) of intangible cultural heritage manifested by the element, which might include one or more of the domains identified in Article 2.2 of the Convention. (This information will be used primarily for visibility, if the element is inscribed.)*

- i) Performing Arts
- ii) Social Practices, Rituals and Festive Events
- iii) Oral Traditions and Expressions
- iv) Knowledge and Practices Concerning Nature and the Universe
- iv) Traditional Craftsmanship

### **D. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENT**

*The brief description of the element will be particularly helpful in allowing the Committee to know at a glance what element is being proposed for inscription, and, in the event of inscription, will be used for purposes of visibility. It should be a summary of the description provided in point 1 below but is not an introduction to that longer description.*

Mudiyettu is a ritualistic art form of Kerala based on the mythological tale of battle between the goddess Kali and the demon Darika. It is a community ritual in which the entire village participates. After the summer crops have been harvested, the villagers reach the temple early in the morning on an appointed day. The traditional performers of Mudiyettu having purified themselves through fasting and prayers, proceed to draw on the temple floor a huge image of goddess Kali called 'Kalam' with coloured powder obtained from organic material. Kalam helps the performers imbue the spirit of the goddess. This is followed by an enactment of Kali-Darika myth, where Kali eventually vanquishes the demon. Mudiyettu performance which is said to herald the dawn of peaceful and prosperous new year, purifies and rejuvenates the whole community. It is performed annually in 'Bhagavati Kavus', the temples of the goddess in different villages of Kerala along the rivers, Chalakkudy Puzha, Periyar and Moovattupuzha among the Marar and Kurup communities.

Mudiyettu combines in itself the mythic, the ritual, the festive and the ecological aspects of the community. At the same time it is an expression of aesthetic and creative aspirations of the community.

## 1. IDENTIFICATION AND DEFINITION OF THE ELEMENT (CF. CRITERION R.1)

*This is the key section of the nomination to satisfy criterion R.1: “The element constitutes intangible cultural heritage as defined in Article 2 of the Convention”. A clear and complete explanation is essential to demonstrate that the nominated element meets the Convention’s definition of intangible heritage. This section should address all the significant features of the element as it exists at present, and should include:*

- a. an explanation of its social and cultural functions and meanings today, within and for its community,*
- b. the characteristics of the bearers and practitioners of the element,*
- c. any specific roles or categories of persons with special responsibilities towards the element,*
- d. the current modes of transmission of the knowledge and skills related to the element.*

*The Committee should receive sufficient information to determine:*

- a. that the element is among the “practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills — as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith —”;*
- b. “that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize [it] as part of their cultural heritage”;*
- c. that it is being “transmitted from generation to generation, [and] is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history”;*
- d. that it provides communities and groups involved with “a sense of identity and continuity”;*  
*and*
- e. that it is not incompatible with “existing international human rights instruments as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development”.*

*Overly technical descriptions should be avoided and submitting States should keep in mind that this section must explain the element to readers who have no prior knowledge or direct experience of it. Nomination files need not address in detail the history of the element, or its origin or antiquity.*

Mudiyettu is a form of dance drama based on the enactment of the Kali - Darika myth associated with the ritual. According to the myth a demon named Darika became extremely powerful after receiving a boon from god Brahma, who promised him that he would never be defeated by any man living in the fourteen worlds mentioned in the Hindu mythology. Darika, armed with this boon, conquered the world and even defeated Indra (the king of gods). When his atrocities became intolerable, Lord Shiva was requested by the divine sage Narada to contain the menace of the demon. As Darika had blindly ignored the chance of ever being killed by a woman, Lord Shiva stated that he would die at the hands of a woman born not among human beings, but the goddess herself.

The ritual starts with the drawing of a large, impressive and ferocious goddess Bhadra Kali holding multiple weapons, on the floor of the temple. The number of hands of the Goddess determines the size of the drawing, which may be in the range of eight to thirty two hands or even more, drawn in perfect symmetry in accordance with the 'tantric' calculations. A three-dimensional effect is imparted to the ferocious figure by placing two mounds of coloured powder on her breasts. Various colours prepared from rice, turmeric, charcoal, green leaves of two specific trees and lime are used for this purpose. Wicker lamps and coconuts are placed at appropriate places to illuminate and decorate the drawing. This auspicious drawing is called 'Kalam'. An elaborate ritual prayer, called 'Kalam Puja' is offered to the Bhadra Kali drawing accompanied by singing of hymns called 'Kalam Pattu'. These hymns describe the deity from head to toe. Along with the artistic intricacies of the form, its immediate relationship with nature and ways of protection are distinguishing features of Mudiyettu.

It is believed that the spirit of the deity resides in a sacred tree in the temple premises. A lamp is lit at the foot of the tree which symbolizes the spirit of goddess Kali. This entire ritual of tree worship, underlining the interconnectedness of man, nature and divine, is closely linked with the

community's ecological world view and its concerns with the conservation of environment. This lamp is then brought into the temple in a procession comprising musicians and devotees. There it is placed on the 'Kalam', thereby instilling in it the spirit of the deity.

To commence the second part of the ritual - the enactment of the Bhadra Kali myth - the lamp in the 'Kalam', which carries the spirit of Bhadra Kali is brought to light the lamp at the performance arena. The beating of performance drums is an open invitation to all the devotees to witness the performance. Two people holding a curtain appear on the scene while the chorus of singers and musicians stand on one side singing invocation songs. This is the 'Poorva Ranga' or prologue of the play. This is followed by the main performance in the temple courtyard. Lord Shiva along with the divine sage Narada comes out from behind the curtain and takes position on a high table to give the impression that he is positioned on the Kailasa Mountain, his Himalayan abode. Sage Narada reads out the palm leaf to acquaint Shiva with Darika's evil acts. Shiva assures Narada that the needful will be done soon. The myth gets unfolded in the form of a drama. The performers worship the lamp and circumambulate the temple. Spectators join the performers, running and dancing around the temple with a heightened sense of drama and excitement. Led by the band of musicians and the actors, the dancing crowd circumambulates the temple in a procession carrying torches. After this the crowd along with actors return to the performance arena, where a battle ensues between the goddess and the demons. The demon is ultimately defeated and his headgear or 'Mudi' is removed, signifying decapitation. This dramatic sequence ends with the ritual of distributing the 'Prasada', the ritual sacrament by the performers to the assembly in the form of flowers and other materials used in the ritual.

Mudiyettu serves as an important cultural site for transmission of traditional values, ethics, moral codes and aesthetic norms of the community to the next generation, thereby ensuring its continuity and relevance in present times. Mudiyettu being an oral tradition is dependent on direct, face to face transmission through traditional Guru-Shishya Parampara (Master-disciple tradition). Responsibility of its transmission lies with the elders and senior performers, who train the younger generation engaging them as apprentices or assistants during the course of performing the ritual.

Within the structure of a self-contained village system of Kerala, Mudiyettu is organized as an annual festival in 'Bhagavati Kavus', village temples of mother goddess, Kali. The temple provides the focal point of village activity and people of all castes are associated with it. Each caste plays a specific role in the Mudiyettu ritual. The Parayan caste provides bamboo artefacts and leather hide for drums; the Tandan brings the areca nut fronds required for masks and headgears; the Ganakan paints the masks; the Kuruvan keeps the country torches burning; the Veluthedan (Patiyan) washes the clothes used for making the deity's dress; the Maran gets the torches ready and keeps them supplied with oil. The priest initiates the rituals inside the temple. Thus each caste in the village contributes to the festival as per its professional expertise and traditional role in the ritual.

It is believed that the performance of Mudiyettu purifies and rejuvenates the whole community. The myth of Kali and Darika enacted through the ritual drama of Mudiyettu propagates the message of victory of good over evil. The staging of this myth promises a peaceful future for humanity. Mutual co-operation and collective participation of each caste in the ritual instils and strengthens the sense of common identity and mutual bonding in the community.

**2. CONTRIBUTION TO ENSURING VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS AND TO ENCOURAGING DIALOGUE (CF. CRITERION R.2)**

*The nomination should demonstrate (Criterion R.2) that "Inscription of the element will contribute to ensuring visibility and awareness of the significance of the intangible cultural heritage and to encouraging dialogue, thus reflecting cultural diversity worldwide and testifying to human creativity".*

*Please explain how the element's inscription on the Representative List will contribute to ensuring visibility of the intangible cultural heritage and will raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of its importance. This section need not address how inscription will bring greater visibility to the element, but how its inscription will contribute to the visibility of intangible cultural heritage more broadly.*

*Explain how inscription will promote respect for cultural diversity and human creativity, and will promote mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals.*

The inscription of this traditional art form will help bring to light at a global platform Mudi yettu as an example of social harmony between the castes and communities which come together to ritually celebrate the victory of good over evil. It will serve as an acknowledgement of the important role that intangible cultural heritage plays in the preservation of social order and peace, at the same time serving as a means to transmit moral values, ethical codes of conduct, socio-cultural concerns and the life affirming worldview of the community. The performance of Mudi yettu is a complex cultural expression of traditional knowledge, religious beliefs, social practices and aesthetic needs of the community, combining culture with nature, belief with art practice; and ritual with entertainment.

In the contemporary context where traditional art forms have to compete with popular modern forms of entertainment, Mudi yettu finds itself struggling at the periphery for recognition. The inscription of Mudi yettu would ensure that this marginal art form would acquire more visibility and relevance within the community and also outside the community by uplifting it from its present marginal and local existence to a globally recognized status as an important element of world intangible heritage.

Development in education, modern technology, consumerist culture propelled by the penetration of modern media and communication system, high income techno-savvy jobs etc. have pushed the present generation away from traditional arts, crafts, and small scale economies associated with ritual and traditional entertainment domains. The inscription in the Representative List would make the community aware of its heritage and would attract the attention of the younger generation towards it. This would help rejuvenate not only the ritual and theatrical aspects of the tradition but will also revive the small scale village industry associated with crafts such as masks, headgears, breastplates, basketry, bamboo crafts, musical instruments etc. This in turn would promote scope for locally based means of employment, thereby arresting the scale of migration and displacement of youth from village and eventual loss of traditional and cultural memory. The inscription would ensure not only revitalization of Mudi yettu but will help regeneration of other folk forms in a collateral beneficial impact. Above all the recognition would ensure revitalization and re-diffusion at a global level of plurality and vibrancy of Mudi yettu tradition in particular and of intangible cultural heritage in general

Under its common roof, Mudi yettu provides space for artists and craftsmen of all the different castes like Parayan, Tandan, Ganakan, Kuru van, Veluthedan, Maran, Poojari etc. to come together in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation. The global recognition of Mudi yettu by inscribing it to UNESCO list will not only enhance its visibility but also help to revitalise this form and associated domains of music, dance, drama, choreography, costumes, makeup, masks and other craft forms.

The ritual-folk theatre of Mudi yettu functions within the domain of folk with many elements of classical theatre. The synthesis between the folk and classical and the oral and textual traditions of the region forge a unique cultural and historically specific performative genre. With a cluster of performances, multiple narratives, musical texts, costumes, masks, innovative organization and a ritual play, Mudi yettu is more than a theatrical presentation. It is a statement on the ecological, spiritual and social viewpoint of the community, through a unique mode of presentation. ICH

recognition of Mudi yettu would improve the frequency of performances, research interests, archival repositories and would pave the way to encourage dialogue between different communities and their art forms.

The message of Mudi yettu is synonymous with the Malayalam saying 'kavu theendiyal kudivellum muttum' or 'destroy the 'kavu' and the village will perish in want of water'. 'Kavu', a stretch of land with virgin vegetation is the abode of the Goddess. It is Her sacred grove and human encroachment of this land is completely forbidden. Practice of maintaining sacred groves and associated cultural heritage is an acknowledged form of traditional system of natural resource management, and an expression of community's ecological worldview. Inscribing Mudi yettu on UNESCO's Intangible Heritage list would be an acknowledgement of the relevance of this world view which is emphatic about maintaining bio-diversity and ecological balance. The inscription would bring to the attention of the World Community this life affirming and ecological world view inherent in cultural practices such as Mudi yettu. This will also pave way for an intercultural dialogue with other communities with similar cultural practices. Such a dialogue would bring about mutual recognition and respect for cultural diversity. The inscription will help Mudi yettu artists and community to have a wider outreach and access to other communities and their art forms in India as well as abroad, which will foster a creative dialogue among them in an atmosphere of mutual respect, recognition, acceptance and exchange.

### **3. SAFEGUARDING MEASURES (CF. CRITERION R.3)**

*Items 3.a. to 3.c. request the elaboration of a coherent set of safeguarding measures as called for in Criterion R.3: "Safeguarding measures are elaborated that may protect and promote the element". Such measures should reflect the broadest possible participation of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned, both in their formulation and in their implementation.*

#### **3.a. Current and recent efforts to safeguard the element**

*Please describe the current and recent efforts of the concerned communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals to ensure the viability of the element. Describe efforts of the concerned State(s) Party(ies) to safeguard the element, taking note of external or internal constraints, such as limited resources.*

Mudi yettu incorporates elements of both oral and performative traditions. Different mechanisms are to be adopted to preserve different elements of this art-form. The initial efforts to safeguard the element started in 1981 under the leadership of G. Shankara Pillai, a renowned theatre personality in Kerala. However being a ritualistic form its preservation lies specifically with the community.

Mudi yettu is a community based, region centric art. The community encourages and trains the next generation to keep it alive. There is no school or institution to give training in this art form. The traditional methods of direct transmission through the Guru-Shishya Parampara (master-disciple tradition) are the only modes to keep this tradition alive. Thus the responsibility of transmission is shouldered by the elders and maestros of this art form. The senior practitioners, well-versed in this art, train the younger generation, engaging them as their assistants in the course of performing the ritual. Three Mudi yettu families have started giving formal training to interested students, to learn both the vocal and the instrumental music; dance steps; and techniques for memorizing the oral text. Training sessions are held on Saturdays and Sundays for 6-8 hours. On week days it is only 1-2 hours.

The patrons and practitioners of this ritual art form welcome institutions and individuals to study and explore the historical and cultural aspects of the tradition, and also to disseminate awareness on this form. Performances are reported in local newspapers, magazines and journals to highlight the cultural, religious and artistic significance of the form. The Ministry of Culture, Government of India has been providing scholarships/fellowships for conducting research on Mudi yettu. The Government of Kerala promotes the Mudi yettu performance through tourism festivals. The people of the region, and the believers and devotees within the community

organize performances of Mudi yettu as thanksgiving after a wish fulfillment. Theatre enthusiasts have begun to look at the form not only as a religious exercise but as an event of cultural and aesthetic significance.

Local experts and research scholars from various institutions like Kerala Kala Mandalam, Department of Theatre Arts, Pondicherry Central University, College of Fine Arts, Govt. of Kerala; Department of Theatre and Music, Sri Sankara University; Kaladi School of Drama, University of Calicut, Natyavedi Kerala etc are closely working with the artists and practitioners to develop a repertory, research centre, website and information centre for Mudi yettu. Natyavedi Kerala, a charitable society since 1978, has been actively involved in documentation and research on Mudi yettu. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts has audio-visually documented the Mudi yettu tradition.

### **3.b. Safeguarding measures proposed**

*For the Representative List, the safeguarding measures are those that may help to solidify the element's current viability and to ensure that its viability is not jeopardized in the future, especially as an unintended result of inscription and the resulting visibility and public attention.*

*Identify and describe the various safeguarding measures that are elaborated that may, if implemented, protect and promote the element, and provide brief information concerning, for example, their priority, scope, approaches, timetables, responsible persons or bodies, and costs.*

Due to negative impact of rampant commercialisation, globalisation and the onslaught of technology, many traditional and ritual art forms are on the verge of extinction. The values espoused by folk traditions are being speedily eroded. Mudi yettu when performed is believed to rejuvenate the body and spirit not only of the performers and the participants but of the whole community. This art form and associated traditional crafts must find a place in the cognitive and cultural map of the country, for which awareness campaigns, regular shows and interactive learning workshops with other artists, performing groups and national art academies needs to be undertaken. It is imperative to generate awareness about Mudi yettu through conducting seminars and documenting the performance, since it addresses the ecological, historical, aesthetic and spiritual needs of humanity at large on a single performative platform.

Mudi yettu is closely associated with ritual and religious beliefs and ecological concerns of the community. Its inscription in the list would attract attention towards it from different segments of the society and there may be an undue pressure for over aestheticization of the theatrical aspect in disjunction with its ritual and ecological aspects. However, it would not be difficult to monitor and curtail this with the help of traditional gurus and experts, who would constitute a monitoring system to evaluate and assess the course of the development of this art form. Chances of a troupe or an individual radically altering the ritual drama are few, since it is the whole community and different groups within it who are directly involved in the preservation, and continuation of this art form. On the other hand, ICH recognition of Mudi yettu would improve the frequency of performances, research interests, archival repositories and would pave the way for a creative engagement with the art form in a spirit of mutual respect and recognition.

The following action plan is proposed for preservation, safeguarding and revitalisation of this traditional art form for next five years:

#### **1. Preservation:**

- Inventory of Mudi yettu performers in the region with the names of practitioners, experts, scholars, singers, musicians and crafts person.
- Establishing a museum of Mudi yettu to display and exhibit different aspects of Mudi yettu performance and associated traditions in arts, crafts and costumes.
- Establishing a regional repertory of Mudi yettu.

#### **2. Safeguarding Measures:**

- Complete documentation of Mudi yettu with its textual and musical and performative repertoire.
- Creation of an audio-visual archives and digital data bank as a rich resource for artists and

scholars.

- Revitalisation with short term training courses by expert practitioners.
- Providing financial assistance to the masters of the art form who would impart training to the next generation.
- Providing fellowship and stipend for younger people to learn this art form.
- Make it a part of theatre curriculum of drama schools both at regional and national level.
- Introduce it into school curriculum as a way of creating and enhancing awareness of this art form and its socio cultural, ecological and aesthetic value to school children to foster mutual respect for cultural diversity and dialogue among different communities.
- Creating platforms and wider public performing space for the art form  
Creative interactive workshops for the artists and scholars at the regional and national levels.  
Awareness campaigns and publicity about the relevance and importance of the tradition and the need for its protection.

### **3. Financial cost for the next five years:**

To carry out the above activities, a total amount of Rs. 1,40,00,000 (2,99,592 USD) approximately to be spent over the next five years, would be kept aside by institutions and bodies responsible for safeguarding.

Approximate cost for first year Rs. 30 Lakhs; (64,198.4 USD)

Approximate cost for second year Rs. 40 Lakhs; (85,597.9 USD)

Approximate cost for third year Rs. 30 Lakhs; (64,198.4 USD)

Approximate cost for fourth year Rs. 20 Lakhs; (42,798.9 USD)

Approximate cost for fifth year Rs. 20 Lakhs (42,798.9 USD)

Institution and bodies involved:

- Ministry of Culture, Government of India, New Delhi
- Department of Culture, Government of Kerala State
- Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Under Government of India, Janpath, New Delhi
- Sangeet Natak Akademy, Under Government of India, Rabindra Bhawan, New Delhi
- South Zone Culture Centre, Under Government of India, Tanjore, Tamilnadu

### **3.c. Commitment of communities, groups or individuals concerned**

*The feasibility of safeguarding depends in large part on the aspirations and commitment of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned. This section should provide evidence that the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned have the will and commitment to safeguard the element if conditions are favourable. The best evidence will often be an explanation of their involvement in past and ongoing safeguarding measures and of their participation in the formulation and implementation of future safeguarding measures, rather than simple pledges or affirmations of their support or commitment.*

Mudiyettu being a ritual drama and a region specific form is sustained by the direct involvement of the community and different castes and professional groups within it. Without the commitment of the community to preserve and continue the tradition it would not have been possible for Mudiyettu to survive over centuries, especially being an oral tradition dependent on face to face transmission from one generation to another. Apart from the community as a whole, the senior artists have made concerted efforts to keep it alive by starting training centres in their homes for young aspirants. The three prominent families performing Mudiyettu have started the following training centres: Pazhoor Damodara Marar Smaraka Gurukulam led by Pazhoor Narayanan Marar and Pazhoor Muraleedharan Marar; Sankarankutty Smaraka Mudiyettu Sangham at Keezhillam, led by Keezhillam Unnikrishnan and Kizhake Varanattu, Mudiyettu Sangham lead by Narayana Kurup.

Many research scholars in the region have undertaken studies on this art form and have made

efforts for its preservation and transmission through documentation, publications, and organizing performances. Local experts and research scholars from various institutions like Kerala Kala Mandalam; Department of Theatre Arts, Pondicherry Central University; College of Fine Arts, Govt. of Kerala; Department of Theatre and Music, Sri Sankara University; Kaladi School of Drama; University of Calicut, Natyavedi Kerala etc are closely working with the artists and practitioners to develop a repertory, research centre, website and information centre for Mudi yettu. Natyavedi Kerala, a charitable society since 1978, has been actively involved in documentation and research on Mudi yettu.

### **3.d. Commitment of State(s) Party(ies)**

*The feasibility of safeguarding also depends on the support and cooperation of the concerned State(s) Party(ies). This section should provide evidence that the State Party concerned has the commitment to support the safeguarding effort by creating favourable conditions for its implementation and should describe how the State Party has previously and will in the future demonstrate such commitment. Declarations or pledges of support are less informative than explanations and demonstrations.*

Soon after Independence in 1947, the Government of India set up the specialized bodies like Sangeet Natak Akademi and other national bodies to revive, preserve and promote the cultural Heritage of the country. In 1980's as another major demonstration of its commitment, the Indian Govt. set up seven Zonal Cultural Centres in different regions of the country to preserve the cultural heritage of local communities. In 1987, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, an autonomous national trust under the Ministry of Culture was set up as a premier resource centre for documentation, preservation and dissemination of multi-layered, pluralistic and variegated cultural heritage of India. Besides Ministry of Culture has been providing scholarships/fellowships to undertake research on Mudi yettu. Government of Kerala has been providing avenues for presentation of Mudi yettu in their promotional programmes. Mudi yettu was presented in the 2007 and 2008 at the Kerala Folklore Festival.

Doordarshan, the national television network under Government of India, has been broadcasting this art form on their channels. These efforts are being made on continuous basis. The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi has also taken steps to document and promote this form.

## **4. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND CONSENT IN THE NOMINATION PROCESS (CF. CRITERION R.4)**

*This section asks the submitting State Party to establish that the nomination satisfies Criterion R.4: 'The element has been nominated following the widest possible participation of the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned and with their free, prior and informed consent'.*

### **4.a. Participation of communities, groups and individuals in the nomination process**

*Describe how and in what ways the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned have participated actively in the nomination process at all stages, as required by Criterion R.4. States Parties are further encouraged to prepare nominations with the participation of a wide variety of other concerned parties, including where appropriate local and regional governments, neighbouring communities, NGOs, research institutes, centres of expertise and other interested parties. The participation of communities in the practice and transmission of the element should be addressed in point 1 above, and their participation in safeguarding should be addressed in point 3; here the submitting State should describe the widest possible participation of communities in the nomination process.*

The different communities, families and groups of Mudi yettu performers in different districts of Kerala were contacted and their participation in the nomination process was ensured. Natyavedi Kerala took lead in this effort. The following three traditional performing families of Mudi yettu were directly and actively involved in audio visual documentation and in the nomination process at all stages:

- Pazhoor Damodhara Marar Samaraka Gurukulam;
- Sankarankutty Marar Mudi yettu Sangham;
- Kizhakke Varanattu Mudi yettu Kala Sangham.

Members of the above groups have already mentioned it in their letters of consent. Pazhoor Narayanan Marar and Pazhoor Muraleedharan Marar are the main performers in the 10 minutes audiovisual documentation. Pazhoor Narayanan Marar also provided inputs for music. Keezhillam Unnikrishnan, Keezhillam Gopala Krishnan, Kizhakke Varanattu Narayana Kurup and other members were involved in photographic documentation of different stages of the presentation of the art form. The members of all the three families were interviewed for inputs for the nomination process. In addition to the performers of Mudi yettu, a few other traditional performers of the same myth in Palkad, Thrissur and Trivandrum districts also contributed in the nomination process. The following NGOs involved in the field of art and culture also took part in the process of documentation especially by providing different views on modes of preservation and protection of the art form.

- Natyavedi Kerala;
- Artists co-operative;
- Mahatma Society for Rural Development.

Natyavedi Kerala took lead to coordinate the nomination process and prepare the audio visual materials. Cultural Institutions, namely Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Kerala State Sangeeth Nataka Academy and Kerala Sahitya Academy helped in the nomination process by providing relevant information. Local theatre personalities and artists like T.M. Abraham, Raju Nair, Ravi Padinjare etc. were also involved in enriching the inputs for nomination with relevant information.

#### **4.b. Free, prior and informed consent to the nomination**

*The free, prior and informed consent to the nomination of the element from the community, group or, if applicable, individuals concerned may be demonstrated through written or recorded concurrence, or through other means, according to the legal regimens of the State Party and the infinite variety of communities and groups concerned. The Committee will welcome a broad range of demonstrations or attestations of community consent in preference to standard or uniform declarations..*

*Please attach supporting evidence demonstrating such consent and indicate below what evidence you are providing and what form it takes.*

As enclosed, in the written form, Mudi yettu performers have already given their consent in a resolution after the meeting at Natyavedi Kerala. Separate consent letters from the three Mudi yettu Performing Communities demonstrating free, prior and informed consent and also their participation in the nomination process, respecting customary practices are attached. Letters from Natya Vedi Kerala, Mahatma Society for Rural Development and Artists co-operative are also attached.

#### **4.c. Respect for customary practices governing access**

*Access to certain specific aspects of intangible cultural heritage is sometimes restricted by customary practices governing, for example, its transmission or performance or maintaining the secrecy of certain knowledge. Please indicate if such practices exist and, if they do, demonstrate that inscription of the element and implementation of the safeguarding measures would fully respect such customary practices governing access to specific aspects of such heritage (cf. Article 13 of the Convention). Describe any specific measures that might need to be taken to ensure such respect.*

Proper care has been taken to preserve the rituals, customs and the spirit of the performance, adhering to the tradition. There is no technical limitation or restriction from the groups and communities of the Mudi yettu art-form, in this regard. The members of the Mudi yettu performing

family have already stated this in their consent.

#### **5. INCLUSION OF THE ELEMENT IN AN INVENTORY (CF. CRITERION R.5)**

*This section is where the State Party establishes that the nomination satisfies Criterion R.5: “The element is included in an inventory of the intangible cultural heritage present in the territory(ies) of the submitting State(s) Party(ies) as defined in Articles 11 and 12”.*

*Identify the inventory in which the element has been included and the office, agency, organization or body responsible for maintaining that inventory. Demonstrate that the inventory has been drawn up in conformity with Articles 11 and 12, in particular Article 11(b) that stipulates that intangible cultural heritage shall be identified and defined “with the participation of communities, groups and relevant non-governmental organizations” and Article 12 requiring that inventories be regularly updated.*

*The nominated element’s inclusion in an inventory should not in any way imply or require that the inventory(ies) should have been completed prior to nomination. Rather, a submitting State Party may be in the process of completing or updating one or more inventories, but has already duly included the nominated element on an inventory-in-progress.*

Mudiyettu is included in the inventory of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), a national repository of Indian arts and culture, under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. IGNCA which has been active in this field since 1987, currently has a repository of over 200 ICH forms, with over 26,000 hours of audio-video material, 28,000 hours of audio recordings, 200,000 still images, 4000 ethnographic objects, and over 200 publications on the subject.

In addition a systematic inventorisation in conformity with Articles 11 and 12 of the Convention has been recently commenced in the year 2008, which includes details of community participation, textual description of the item, still photographs, consent of the community etc. This inventory was made with the help of direct involvement of the community and Zonal Culture centres and other NGOs working among the communities. Each entry carries a letter of consent from the community. The exercise of building and updating of the inventory is an ongoing process. It was last updated in August 2009.

IGNCA works directly with the communities in local areas and all documentation, research and dissemination activities are carried out with the help of community representatives as resource persons and with full support, consent and active participation of the community. Members of the community are invited to IGNCA to participate in workshops/seminars and cultural festivals. They are encouraged to hold artist workshops and hold exhibitions. Besides, the IGNCA has three regional centres, Varanasi in North; Bangaluru in South; Guwahati in Northeast who directly work with the communities in the field of cultural heritage.

#### **DOCUMENTATION**

##### **a. Required and supplementary documentation**

Required documentation provided.

##### **b. Cession of rights including registry of items**

Required cession of rights provided.

##### **c. List of additional resources**

1. Keralathile Natoti Natakangal (in Malayalam language) (Folk Dramas in Kerala), by Dr. S.K. Nair, 1995.

2. Mudiyyettum Kathakaliyum (in Malayalam language) (Mudiyyettu and Kathakali), by Dr. Devi Prasad, 2003.
3. Mudiyyettu Oru Anushtana Natoti Natakam (in Malayalam language) (Mudiyyettu: a ritual folk drama), by Kezhillam Unnikrishnan, 2003.
4. Mudiyyettu Natoti Nerarangu (in Malayalam language), by Dr. C.R. Rajagopal, 2004.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### a. Contact person for correspondence

Member Secretary,  
Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)  
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New Delhi 110001  
India  
Phone: +9111-23383895  
Email: msignca@yahoo.com  
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### b. Competent body involved

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, C.V Mess Building, Janpath, New Delhi, India. Pin code: 110001

### c. Concerned community organization(s) or representative(s)

- Dr. Chunkath K Thomas, President, Natyavedi Kerala, Chunkante Tharavadu, P.O Pushpagiri, Meloor, Chalakudy via Thrissur district, Kerala state. Pin code: 680311 India. Mobile Phone: 91-9447079777. Email: drchunkath@gmail.com
- Ms. Meena Paul, 5 E, Cheloor Golden Enclave, Zenana Mission Road, Chembookavu, Thrissur, Kerala. Pin code: 680020.
- Ms. N P Mary, Secretary Artists Co operative, Cheeyedan House, Thoppil Road, Edappilly, Ernakulam. Pin code: 682024
- Pazhoor Narayanan Marar, President, Pazhoor Damodara Marar Smaraka Gurukulam, Kannattu House, Piravam, Ernakulam. Pin code: 686664
- Keezhillam Unnikrishnan, President, Shankarankutty Smaraka Mudiyyettu troupe, Koothuvathukal, Keezhillam, Ernakulam Dist
- Kizhakke Varanattu Nanukurup, President Kizhakke Varanattu Mudiyyettu Kala Sangham, Koratty, Thrissur District, Kerala, India.

## SIGNATURE ON BEHALF OF THE STATE PARTY

Name: Ms Roopa Srinivasan

Title: Director (Finance), Ministry of Culture, Government of India

Date: 25 August 2009

Signature: <signed>